

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT STATE 245327 SENT CINCPACREP GUAM INFO CINCPAC
USIA SECDEF NSC DATED OCT 15.

QUOTE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SREF

SUBJECT: PRESS STATEMENT ON GUAM WHEN REPATRIATE SHIP
SAILS

REF: TAFT/KEELEY TELCON OCT. 15

1. IATF DEPUTY DIRECTOR KEELEY ON GUAM SHOULD MAKE
FOLLOWING PRESS STATEMENT AT TIME REPATRIATE SHIP SAILS.
BLANKS TO BE FILLED IN ON GUAM. BEGIN TEXT.

A. ON SEPTEMBER 30, MRS. JULIA V. TAFT, DIRECTOR OF THE
INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE ON INDOCHINA REFUGEES, ANNOUNCED
THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO ACCEDE TO
THE URGENT PLAS OF SEVERAL HUNDRED REPATRIATES ON GUAM TO
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BE ENABLED TO RETURN TO VIETNAM ABOARD A VIETNAMESE SHIP

ANCHORED AT GUAM. THAT SHIP, THE VIETNAM THUONG TIN I, DEPARTED GUAM TODAY, OCTOBER (INSERT DATE), AT (INSERT TIME) HOURS GUAM TIME WITH (INSERT NUMBER) PERSONS ABOARD.

B. THE DECISION OF THE REPATRIATES TO RETURN RESTED ENTIRELY WITH THEM. PRIOR TO THEIR EMBARCATION EACH REPATRIATE OR HEAD OF REPATRIATE HOUSEHOLD WAS INTERVIEWED TO CONFIRM HIS DECISION TO RETURN ABOARD THE SHIP. A PETITION WHICH THE REPATRIATES SIGNED IN SEPTEMBER DESCRIBED

THEIR FRUSTRATION AT BEING SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILIES AS THE MAJOR REASON FOR THEIR ARDENT DESIRE TO RETURN TO VN AND THIS SAME REASON WAS CITED MOST OFTEN DURING THE PRE-BOARDING INTERVIEWS. THE PROCESSING AND DEPARTURE WERE OBSERVED BY THE AMERICAN RED OSS.

C. IN ACCEDING TO THE REPATRIATES' REQUEST TO LEAVE BY THIS MEANS, THE UNITED STATES HAS TAKEN ALL FEASIBLE STEPS TO ASSURE THE SAFETY OF THEIR VOYAGE. THE U.S. NAVY HAS HELPED PREPARE THE VESSEL FOR SAILING AND HAS PROVISIONED AND FUELED IT FOR THE VOYAGE. AN INSPECTION FOR SEAWORTHINESS WAS PROVIDED BY THE LLOYDS OF LONDON REPRESENTATIVE ON GUAM. A CREW OF FORMER VIETNAMESE MERCHANT MARINE AND NAVY PERSONNEL, ORGANIZED BY THE REPATRIATES, HAS CONDUCTED SHAKEDOWN CRUISES TO FAMILIARIZE ITSELF WITH THE VESSEL AND ASSURE THAT THE SHIP AND CREW ARE UP TO ACCEPTED STANDARDS OF READINESS. THE THOUNG TIN HAS BEEN PROVIDED WITH NAVIGATIONAL AND COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT OF NORMAL MARITIME STANDARDS TO ASSURE THAT THE SHIP CAN REPORT ITS PROGRESS AND REQUEST ASSISTANCE IF NECESSARY. THE UNITED STATES WILL, OF COURSE, ASSIST THE VESSEL AT ANY TIME ASSISTANCE IS REQUESTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD MARITIME PRACTICES.

D. SOME REFUGEES IN THE UNITED STATES WHO HAVE REQUESTED REPATRIATION DID NOT ELECT TO RETURN ON THE THUONG TIN I. THE U.S.G. HAS ASKED THE UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES TO CONTINUE TO ACT ON BEHALF OF THIS GROUP AND TO CONTINUE TO ASSIST THEM -- AS WELL AS ANY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OTHERS WHO MIGHT IN THE FUTURE DECIDE TO GO BACK -- IN RETURNING TO VIETNAM. END TEXT.

2. FYI: ADDITIONAL PRESS GUIDANCE, IF ASKED, FOR FOLLOWING QUESTION WHICH COMES UP QUITE FREQUENTLY.

Q. BOTH NORTH AND SOUTH VIETNAM HAVE CHARGED THAT THE

USG IS VIOLATING THEIR SOVEREIGNTY BY SENDING REFUGEES ON
GUAM BACK BYHSHIP. WHAT IS YOUR REACTION TO THIS?

A. OUR ACTIONS HAD NO OTHER INTENTION OR IMPLICATION
BEYOND THE PURELY HUMANITARIAN ONE OF PROVIDING THE
REPATRIATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO REJOIN THEIR FAMILIES. KISSINGER
UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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